UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHIEF, BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY
AND REFER TO

March 8, 1927.

The Chairman and Members,

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Advisory Board.

Gentlemen:

In connection with the submission by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Advisory Board of certain recommendations for changes in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act Regulations, it appears desirable that a memorandum bearing on the reasons for their desirability should accompany them.

Among other recommendations submitted to the Advisory Board for its consideration at the meeting held on December 9, 1926, was one that the daily bag limit on wild ducks be reduced from 25 to 15 in all States or parts of States wherein the State or local law provides less than three rest days in each week of the open season, and that the daily bag limit on geese be reduced from 8 to 6 in all States or parts of States wherein the State or local law provides less than three rest days in each week. After considering these suggestions the Board recommended substitute regulations placing the bag limit on ducks at 15 a day and the bag limit on geese at 6 a day, both to be effective throughout the country.

That the Board had made such recommendations became widely known immediately following the meeting, and resulted in such a large number of protests and of demands for a hearing on the subject that the Secretary of Agriculture announced a public conference to be held at Washington on January 20, 1927, to discuss methods of reducing the number of migratory wild fowl to be killed each year. Approximately 90 people were in attendance at this meeting and the subject of wild fowl, their numbers and methods of restricting the annual kill received extended consideration. A very general opinion was voiced that the reduction in bag limits is an exceedingly imperfect and unsatisfactory method of actually reducing the kill of birds, one reason being that it is practically an impossibility actually to control the number of birds each hunter kills, in view of the very limited number of available wardens. It was generally agreed that a reduction in the length of the open season would effect a definite and real reduction in the annual kill.

Following this meeting, through letters, telegrams, and personal conferences a very large number of additional sportsmen and State game officials have been consulted in regard to this matter. While there is a commonly expressed demand for a reduction in bag limits to 15 a day, yet in the light of the information available it appears plain that such a reduction would amount to very little more than conservation on paper. It is commonly agreed in most parts of the country that under the present Federal bag limit of 25 birds a day the vast majority of hunters are not able to get as many as 15 birds a day. As a consequence a reduction in bag limit would have no effect whatever on the great proportion of sportsmen. Furthermore, a considerable number of States have passed, or are planning to pass, laws at the present or coming